

# Iowa Department on Aging

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Director Donna Harvey

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## **The Department on Aging Reminds Iowans That Changes in Medicare Gives Opportunity to Assess Their Health Before Problems Arise**

*A Good Start to a Healthy Future is a Physical Exam*

(Des Moines) Today Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) Director Donna Harvey reminded Iowans that if they are new to Medicare, they should take charge of their health by getting the "Welcome to Medicare" physical exam now available.

New this year, Medicare will cover a one-time "Welcome to Medicare" physical exam for free for those new to Medicare.

"This is wonderful news to those covered by Medicare for the first time. This comprehensive exam can help spot small problems before they become big problems, and can help Medicare recipients take charge of their healthcare by going in for a complete exam and knowing where they may need to improve their health and well being," Director Harvey stated.

The "Welcome to Medicare" physical exam includes the following:

- ✓ A review of medical and social history including risk factors the recipient can change
- ✓ A physical exam that includes measuring your height, weight, blood pressure, visual acuity screen, and body mass index
- ✓ Education, counseling, and referrals based on the results of your physical exam
- ✓ A brief written plan, such as a checklist, for getting appropriate screening and/or other Medicare Part B preventive services
- ✓ A review of your potential risk factors for depression
- ✓ End of life planning if wanted

Harvey continued, "Thanks to the new healthcare law, Medicare also covers a yearly 'wellness' exam (once you've had Part B for longer than 12 months and if it has been 12 months from your "Welcome to Medicare" physical examination.) Going for a yearly exam will help Medicare recipients develop or update a prevention plan to improve their health and well being."

Each individual's plan may include recommendations for physical activity, smoking cessation, nutrition counseling and referral to programs such as the chronic disease self-management program.

Medicare recipients will pay nothing for the exam as long as their doctor accepts the Medicare assignment.

To find out more about this new Medicare provision, contact SHIIP (Senior Health Insurance Information Programs) toll-free: 1-800-351-4664.

For more information on the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) visit: <http://www.aging.iowa.gov/> or call 1-800-532-3213. To locate resources for older adults and people with disabilities go to: [www.lifelonglinks.org](http://www.lifelonglinks.org).

The mission of the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) is to provide advocacy, educational, and prevention services to help Iowans remain independent as they age. IDA administers over 32 million dollars in services and supports through a network of 13 Area Agencies on Aging across the state.

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